
The Function of English Loanwords in Japanese

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This paper examines the functions played by English loanwords in Japanese. It is shown that English loanwords have a role that extends far beyond the simple filling of lexical-gaps. Indeed, loanwords frequently take the place of an existing native equivalent where they perform a variety of "special effect" functions. In addition, English loanwords may be employed for euphemistic effect when a native equivalent is considered too direct. Drawing largely on examples of loanword use from advertising, this study considers the role English loanwords play as lexical gap fillers, special effect givers, and euphemisms.

Introduction

In recent years Japanese has seen a rapid increase in the number of words taken from other languages. The proliferation of these foreign borrowings is reflected in the number of entries for these words in major dictionaries. In 1967, for example, the Dictionary of Foreign Words, published by Kodakawa Shoten, listed 25,000 loanwords. By 1991, Sanseido's Concise Dictionary of Foreign Words contained 33,500 loans, while the 2000 edition of Sanseido had further expanded to over 45,000 loanwords. Out of all these loanwords, or what the Japanese call *gairaigo* (外来語; lit. words which have come from outside), English loans are by far the most numerous, constituting approximately 90% of the total (Shinnouchi, 2000: 8). Drawing on numerous examples, particularly from Japanese print advertising¹, this paper examines the major functions performed by these English loanwords.

The Japanese Writing Systems

To understand how the representation of English loanwords fits into the Japanese writing systems, it is helpful to have a basic knowledge of the overall system. Japanese is written with Chinese ideograms, called *kanji*, and the *kana*, which consists of two phonetic syllabaries called *hiragana* and *katakana*. *Hiragana* are rounded while *katakana* are angular, but both systems represent the same set of forty-six syllables.

Hiragana represent Japanese verb inflections and particles which have no equivalent in Chinese, and are also used in place of Chinese characters in easy texts such as children's books. *Katakana* is used primarily to write Western loanwords, non-Japanese proper names (except for Chinese and Korean names), and native onomatopoeic words. It is also used to write the names of some plants and animals, and for emphasis (comparable to the use of Italics

or special fonts in English).

The use of *katakana* as a script to represent loanwords is intrinsically related to the function that loanwords play in written discourse, particularly advertising. Firstly, the attention-grabbing function of loanwords themselves is augmented by the bold, angular script of *katakana*. Fukumitsu (2001) points out that *katakana* may be an effective messenger for loanwords because it is the less familiar of the two *kana* scripts. At school, children learn *hiragana* before they progress on to *katakana* and this, he suggests, results in most Japanese feeling less “*shitashii*” (familiar) with *katakana* compared to *hiragana*. It is *katakana*’s relative unfamiliarity that enables it to deliver a loanword with greater impact than could the more familiar and gently flowing *hiragana* (48).

It would seem that the existence of *katakana*, which makes it possible for a vast number of loanwords to be transcribed into a domestic script, would also serve to integrate loanwords into the language. It has been argued, however, that *katakana* does just the opposite; it actually prevents loanword integration. Heitani (1993) describes the paradox of a language which “allows everything in, but in fact gets by without anything entering” (なんでも入れられるけど、本当はなんにも入れずにすむのです) (42). She argues that the bold and simple lines of the *katakana* symbols physically separate loanwords from the Japanese *wago* and Chinese *kango*. In this way, *katakana* has protected Japanese from the complete assimilation of foreign loans. This may be one reason why the influx of loanwords has met with relatively little resistance. It could be argued that the work of the *Academie Francaise* (France’s “language watchdog”) is silently being performed by *katakana* which compartmentalizes loanwords, thereby allowing Japanese to “gain maximum benefit from their addition to the lexical pool, while protecting the native vocabulary from change” (Kay, 1995: 73).

The Function of English Loanwords in Japanese

English loanwords perform three main functions in Japanese. Firstly, when an equivalent native word does not exist, a loanword may become necessary to fill a “lexical gap” (Takashi, 1990: 330). Secondly, loanwords may substitute for native equivalents to achieve some kind of special effect. In addition, they may be employed as euphemisms in certain cases.

Filling a lexical gap

The most basic use of loanwords is to name things or ideas when no equivalent native word exists. *Rajio* (ラジオ; radio) and *roketto* (ロケット; rocket) are two examples of things introduced into Japan from abroad for which there was no pre-existing Japanese word. The adoption of Western concepts and lifestyles has also been accompanied by the introduction of new loanwords. For example, the word *deeto* (デート; date) was first introduced during the US occupation (1945–1952) and reflected a more liberal view of male-female relations in a society where *omiai* (arranged marriage) was common (Stanlaw, 1990: 117). Another example is *puraibashii* (プライバシー; privacy) for which there is no native word. In pre-modern Japan, when people lived in small intimate communities, there may not have been an overriding need for a word to describe an individual’s right to freedom from other’s interference. However, in modern, urban Japan where even the next door neighbour may be a stranger, a lexical gap developed which was filled by the English word “privacy”.

Loanwords also have the ability to bestow recognition on a social problem or need that may exist without a name. *Sekuhara* (セクハラ), a word produced by the back clipping of the words “sexual” and “harassment”, is an example of the “recognition bestowal” function of loanwords. Ochiai (NHK television, *Shinten ron ten*, August 24, 2001) points out that previously there was no specific Japanese word for sexual harassment, although it had been (and arguably still is) a deeply rooted feature of Japanese culture. The adoption of this word from English has led to a heightened awareness of sexism in Japanese society. The borrowing of *domesuchikku baiorensu* (ドメスチック バイオレンス; domestic violence) and *stooka* (ストーカ; stalker) are two other examples of what Ochiai calls, “the winning of words” (言葉の獲得) by campaigners fighting to bring to public attention various social problems.

Loanwords are adopted or pseudo loans² are created as certain social needs arise and attitudes change. For example, *kea waakaa* (ケア・ワーカー; care worker) describes an occupation which came into existence in response to the problems posed by the increasing number of elderly people who needed care, but were no longer able to rely on the support of an extended family. Another example is the word *bariafurii* (バリアフリー; barrier free), which became common usage in the early 1990’s. It originally described houses that had been modified to make them more accessible to the elderly. The popularity *Gotaifumanzoku*, a book published in 1997 and authored by Ototake Hiroda, a young man who was born without limbs, helped to make the public aware of the need to create a *bariafurii shakai* (バリアフリー社会; barrier-free + society [J]³) which was accessible to both able bodied and disabled citizens alike. The adoption of loanwords may also reveal other attitudinal changes such as the way the Japanese are becoming more questioning of those in authority. For example, the phrase *infoomudo konsento* (インフォームドコンセント; informed consent) first started to be heard in the late 1980’s and reflected a call for more openness in public institutions in general. A series of serious medical accidents in recent years has also led some hospitals to introduce a system whereby patients can be referred to another doctor for a *sekondo opinion* (セコンド・オピニオン; second opinion). Previously, the almost god-like status of doctors meant patients rarely questioned their doctor’s diagnosis or advice.

Technical terms like *sofuto wea* (ソフトウェア; software) carry out a similar function to other lexical gap fillers, but are more specialized. Certain specialist or technical words such as *sutoresu* (ストレス; stress) and the loan blend *kankyoo horumon* (環境ホルモン; [J] environment[al] + hormone) have entered the wider vocabulary through extensive media exposure. The adoption of many loanwords, and technical terms in particular, provide the Japanese with a common international vocabulary that is useful in this era of globalization.

In the author’s study of Japanese print advertising, it was found that advertisements related to health and beauty contained significantly fewer technical-term loanwords than advertisements selling high-tech services and products (4.9% of the total loanwords for the health and beauty product field were classified as technical terms compared to 31.9% and 29.5% for the high-tech and car fields respectively). The high percentage of technical terms in the high-tech field is not unexpected; many words related to computers such as *deetabeesu* (データベース; database) and *sofuto wea* (ソフトウェア; software) are recent neologisms even into the English language. The developments in this field have proceeded so rapidly, and on such a global scale that there would have been little time to emulate the Meiji translators who transformed foreign lexical imports into native *kanji* equivalents, even if there had been

the inclination.

In adverts for cosmetics, specialist terms such as *koraagen* (コラーゲン; collagen) *ion* (イオン; ion) and *furiirajikaru* (フリーラジカル; free radical) not only fill a lexical gap, but also lend the product an aura of “scientific reliability”. However, perhaps because such words may project “too clinical” an image, the author found that technical terms were used sparingly in advertisements belonging to this product field.

The loanword *furiirajikaru*, which is used in an advertisement for a face cream (Sisleya anti-aging cream), is unlikely to be understood by many of the advertisement’s target audience. The author’s study found numerous other examples of difficult English loanwords being used in advertisements. For example, it is questionable whether most Japanese readers would understand the meaning of “gravity” and “firming” in the following description of a face cream:

アンティ グラヴィティ ファーミング リフト クリーム

Anti gurabeti faamingu rifuto kuriimu

Anti-gravity firming lift cream. (Clinique skin cream)

It is unlikely that the use of such words is a case of copywriters overestimating the English ability of their audience. In fact, Nozomi (1998) argues that the inclusion of English that is not fully understood has the same psychological effect on the readers as *chokugo* (勅語) did up until the end of the Second World War. *Chokugo* referred to the special language previously used by the emperor to address the Japanese people. It contained many obscure kanji compounds that were incomprehensible to most ordinary citizens. Nozomi suggests that this inability to fully understand the proclamations of the emperor had the effect of planting an inferiority complex in those who attempted to read them. As a result, the emperor, who was the source of this *chokugo*, then became an object of reverence. Nozomi suggests that advertisers use loanwords to elicit in the audience a similar kind of inferiority complex, which may in turn lead them to perceive the product as being somehow superior, and therefore desirable (78).

Another way in which difficult loanwords may serve as a psychological tool of the copywriters is by giving the audience a chance to exercise what Pateman (1983) calls their “cognitive competencies” (205). Pateman suggests that adverts are “pleasurable discourses,” partly because they call upon some of our more sophisticated linguistic and cognitive skills. Figuring out the meaning of loanwords may make advertisements a source of intellectual pleasure in the same way as, for example, a crossword puzzle. This may lead to the product being more highly appraised. For example, the loan blend *ooto kuchuuru shitagi* (オートクチュール下着; haute couture + [J] underwear) appears in an advert for Saison ladies underwear. The addressee who understands this word (which Tanaka [1994] points out has effectively become part of the English language [56]) will probably be left with a warm glow of satisfaction. Such positive feelings may then be projected on to the product.

Substitution for special effect

On a visit to New York to survey the site of the World Trade Center terrorist attack, Prime Minister Koizumi made a statement to the accompanying Japanese press corps. Although he was addressing Japanese speakers, he incorporated a number of English phrases such as

“*haato bureikingu*” (ハートブレイキング; heart breaking) “*ui masuto faito terrorizumu*” (ウィーマスstofaitoテロリズム; “we must fight terrorism”) into his statement. By using English, the Prime Minister may have wanted to make his comments more internationally relevant, knowing perhaps that the English portions of the interview would probably be picked up by the US media. In addition, the use of English for certain key phrases could have served to emphasize sympathy and resolution more effectively than equivalent Japanese expressions, which may have sounded hackneyed or insincere. The special effect function of English loanwords, illustrated by the above example, will be discussed further in this section.

Conveying “Western qualities”

Loanwords are often associated with a sophisticated Western lifestyle, and may be used in place of Japanese words with equivalent meaning because of their “cosmopolitan” appeal. The following slogan, quoted in Naito (2001: 84) and taken from a classic 1965 Toyota advertisement is a good example of this use of English:

白いクラウンは、幸せなハイライフの象徴
shiroi kuraun wa, shiawase na hairaifu no shocho
 The white Crown, symbol of a contented highlife

The use of the trade name *kuraun* and the noun *hairaifu* helps the audience to form what Haarmann (1984) calls “sophisticated images of life” (104), while the actual purchasing of the product will, so the audience is led to believe, make possible the realization of these images. Similarly, the following extracts from an advertisement for a new block of luxury apartments in Nagoya illustrates how loanwords are used to convey an image of a modern, Western lifestyle:

- 1) *tsukaiyasui kicchin puran* (使いやすいキッチンプラン; a kitchen layout which is easy to use). It is possible that *kicchin* is used in preference to the Japanese word *daidokoro* (台所) because it is more likely to trigger images of a place which is spacious and modern.
- 2) *hausukiipingu mo raku* (ハウスキーピングも楽; housekeeping is easy). The use of *hausukiipingu* fits in better with the image of a modern kitchen than does *kaji* (家事; housework).
- 3) *misesu ni ureshii senshin kicchin* (ミセスに嬉しい先進キッチン; a modern kitchen to make the “Mrs.” happy). Several Japanese women I interviewed commented that the use of *misesu* (Mrs.) conveyed a more positive image of a “liberated wife” compared to the Japanese title *okusan* (奥さん).

Using English to be trendy and modern

The lyrics of most modern Japanese pop music contain varying amounts of English. A look at the top ten singles for March 26, 2001 (Tokai Walker, April 17, 2001) showed that seven of the songs had English in their titles. One reason that English is often used in pop music is to make it sound more Western. Pre-war popular music did not generally use English (Tsuruoka, 1996: 6), and it is interesting to note that the lyrics of more traditional Japanese popular music called *enka* (演歌) contain much less English than the modern pops. *Enca*’s selling point is its traditional nostalgic melodies which may be “corrupted” by too much Western influence in the form of English.

The popularity of the so called *katakana shokugyoo* (カタカナ職業), professions which are written in the *katakana* script and are regarded as desirable due to their Western flavour,

is another indication of the appeal of English loanwords. While many of these *katakana* occupations such as *shisutemu anarisuto* (システム・アナリスト; systems analyst) employ loanwords to fill a lexical gap, people often prefer a *katakana* title on their business card even if a native equivalent exists. A recent advertising campaign for NEC mobile phones shows that copywriters are well aware of the positive image projected by these occupations. The advertisements pictured several successful people holding their NEC mobile phones and the featured person's name and occupation. The professions of those appearing in NEC's campaign included: *Itaria jin esseisuto* (イタリア人エッセイスト; Italian essayist) *ongaku purodyuusa* ([J] 音楽プロデューサー; music+producer) and *fasshon moderu* (ファッションモデル; fashion model).

Triggering "ethnocentric stereotypes"

Haarmann (1984) commented that "the foreigner, from whatever country he may come, will meet with Japanese stereotypes about his nation and culture which can hardly be found in any other modern industrialized society in such a pure and stable form" (102). Copywriters understand that the Japanese tend to make sense of the world by means of such stereotypes, and may use loanwords to trigger them, thereby leading the consumer to associate the product with the qualities and values from which the loanword originated. Western loanwords usually trigger positive stereotypes, serving to underline the high prestige of the product and producer's name. A manufacturer will give a car an English name such as Civic or Lancer, to evoke quality, reliability and practicality, while a French one may be preferred if the image of elegance, taste, sophistication or charm is desired.

Changing the image of things that do not really change

Loanwords can serve to alter the meaning associated with a thing or idea, even if the thing or idea remains in essence unchanged. For example, the use of *koochingu sutaffu* (コーチングスタッフ; coaching staff) in a classified advertisement for a local sports center conveys an image of a position which requires expert knowledge, while the Japanese equivalent, *shidooin* (指導員), has a more general meaning of "instructor". The same sports center advertised special *suchuudento* (スチューデント; student) membership rates although university students in Japan are generally called *gakusei* (学生). The Japanese word for swimsuit, *mizugi*, formed from the characters for water+to wear (水着), has a core meaning which overlaps with that of *suimusuutsu* (スイムスーツ; swimsuit). The loanword, however, "spices up" the image of this piece of apparel into something which can worn on the beach as a fashion accessory, and not just in the local pool (Otsuka, 2000: 84). Other examples of this function of English loanwords include changing the name of a *daikaigijo* (大会議場; lit. big meeting place) to *konbenshon hooru* (コンベンションホール; convention hall), or using the English term *oopuningu seremonii* (オープニングセレモニー; opening ceremony) instead of *kaikaishiki* (開会式).

Telling East from West

Loan words function to distinguish between Western and Japanese versions of comparable things. For example, the word *gaadeningu* (ガーデニング; gardening) started to be used widely in the 1980's when English-style gardens came into fashion. The loanword

distinguishes this pass-time from the Japanese *engei* (園芸; gardening). While *gaadeningu* may conjure up images of Beatrix Potter and afternoon tea on a neatly trimmed lawn, *engei* is more likely to be associated with traditional Japanese gardens and *bonsai*. Other examples include using *ringo* (リンゴ; apple) when talking about the whole fruit, but *appuru* (アップル; apple) to refer to Western dishes such as apple pie. Similarly, the loanword *furuutsu* (fruit) is often used for Western foods such as *furuutsu keeki* (フルーツケーキ; fruit cake) or *furuutsu guranoora* (フルーツ・グラノーラ; fruit granola), while the Japanese *kudamono* (果物) is usually chosen when talking about whole fruit.

Providing a supplementary vocabulary

Loanwords provide Japanese with a huge supplementary vocabulary, thereby making the language more versatile. For example, in a company meeting, the marketing manager may refer to the people buying a product as *yuuzaa* (ユーザー; user), but when addressing a customer directly he or she would most likely use the honorific word *okyakusama* (お客さま). In addition, as the following examples show, the supplementary vocabulary provided by loanwords is often used by copywriters for creative word play:

Shattaa chansu no mae ni, rakkii chansu ga arimasu.

シャッターチャンスの前に、ラッキーチャンスがあります。

Before your *shutter chance*, you get a *lucky chance*.

(Advertisement for Polaroid film offering a chance to win a prize with each purchase)

suteitasu de noranai, sutairu de noru

ステイタスで乗らない、スタイルで乗る

Don't drive for *status*-drive for *style*. (Advertisement for Toyota vista)

Although loanwords used for special effect do have Japanese equivalents, there is often a difference in the connotative meaning attached to loanwords. A study carried out by Nakamura (1995) into how Japanese students perceive loanwords of colour revealed that the connotations triggered by loanwords were not the same as those elicited by native colour adjectives. For example, when subjects were presented with the Japanese word for yellow, *kiiro* (黄色), the most prevalent emotional reaction was *anshin kan ga nai* (安心感が無い; a feeling of uneasiness). In contrast the students associated the loanword *ieroo* (イエロー; yellow) with *akarui* (bright) and *kirei* (pretty). The connotations that words may trigger helps to explain why Japanese copywriters often opt for loanwords instead of Japanese ones with the same core meaning. An advert for a lady razor (*Plate 1*) shows how the connotations associated with loanwords may be favourable to the product's image. With hair removal being a rather sensitive issue for many women, the copywriter of this advert has used loanwords to make the product, and the act of shaving appear as feminine as possible. We can see how this is achieved in the following extracts from the advert.

1) *derikeeto na o-hada ni yasashii sanmaiba* (デリケートなお肌にやさしい三枚刃)

Three blades, gentle on delicate skin

2) *onnanoko no bodii yoo kaeba shiki rezaa* (女の子のボディ用替刃式レザー)

The razor for a girl's *body* with changeable blades

In the first extract, the loanword *derikeeto* modifies the Japanese word *hada* (skin) (which in turn has been softened and made more feminine by the addition of the honorific *o*). In the



Plate 1: Lady razor

second extract, the use of *bodii* in place of the Japanese word *karada* (体) again softens the tone of the advert. Native speakers interviewed for the author’s study regarded *bodii* as less “*namanamashii*” (explicit) than the Japanese word. The use of *rezaa* also sounds more feminine than the Japanese word *kamisori* (剃刀), which is usually associated with men’s shaving. A final point concerning this particular advert is the following slogan:

Watashi no tsurutsuru tsuruu (わたしのツルツル、ツール)
My tsuru tsuru tool (*tsuru tsuru* is onomatopoeia for smooth)

Here the loanword *tsuru* (tool) is used in a pun to set off the advertisement’s soft, distinctly “non-bristly” tone.

The following extract from an advert for the Volkswagon Bora car is another example of loanwords being used to elicit images that may make the product appear positive and desirable:

Asayake no windingu roodo. Tokai de otona no kuruijingu ni hitaru jikan. Shuumatsu no koteeji e to, dokomademo tsuzuku michi.

朝焼けのウインディングロード。都会で大人のクルージングにひたる時間。週末のコテージへと、どこまでも続く道。

A winding road at sunset. Indulge in sophisticated urban cruising. The weekend—cottage and a road that rolls on forever.

The use of *shuumatsu no koteeji* (weekend cottage) may trigger in the audience's mind images of an ideal, possibly English, rural landscape and the comfortable lifestyle of those who live there, while *kuruujingu* (cruising) and *windingu roodo* (winding road) hint at the promise of space and freedom, which is at such a premium in Japan. In this way, loanwords help to subtly suggest that by buying the product you will also gain a certain lifestyle. In addition, the description of the Volkswagen Bora as a *puremiamu supooti sedan* (プレミアム スポーティセダン; a premium sporty sedan) conveys a sense of exclusivity which appeals to what Goatly (2000) calls the "snobbishness of consumers" (193).

Euphemistic function of loanwords

There are occasions when loanwords are used because the native equivalent sounds too direct, or when the implied meaning of a word can have negative evaluations. As may be expected, the areas of sex and personal hygiene are particularly rich in such loanwords. For example, the phrase *heanuudo*⁴(ヘア・ヌード; hair+nude) refers to photographs which show pubic hair with the loanword *hea* serving as a euphemism for the explicit Japanese *inmou* (陰毛; pubic hair). Loanwords often provide a mask of innocuity to certain sectors of the "entertainment business". For instance, *herusu* (ヘルス; health) refers to sexually orientated massage parlors while the addition of another loanword, *deribari* (delivery), to the head noun forms the pseudo loan *deribari herusu* (デリバリーヘルス; delivery+health). This is the provision of the health girls' services to private residences and hotels.

Companies selling certain products often rely on loanwords to provide more ambiguous trade names; examples include a sanitary towel called *sentaa in* (センターイン; center in) and a drink to relieve constipation named *kuria* (クリア; clear). In the author's study of advertisements, all the examples of euphemisms collected appeared in the advertisements belonging to the health and beauty field. This is perhaps not surprising because tact is probably more important for advertisements selling things that are used to change our appearance in some way than they are for products such as cars or computers.

Stanlaw (1999) suggests that the increasing use of the loanword *mai* (マイ; my) is an example of the euphemistic function of loanwords. This word, which is used in many compounds such as *mai hoomu* (マイ・ホーム; my+home; a home which is not rented) and *maikaa* (マイ・カー; my+car, a car one owns), reflects a move from group consciousness to a more individual orientated society. The use of *mai*, Stanlaw argues, is favoured because it is less direct than the Japanese possessive pronoun *watashi no* (私の; mine), which sounds more emphatic and self-centered (118).

Other examples of the euphemistic use of loanwords include *shinguru maza* (シングル・マザー; a single mother) being used instead of the harsher sounding Japanese *mikon no haha* (未婚の母; an unmarried mother) and the use of *shirubaa* (シルバー; silver) to refer to elderly people in compounds such as *shirubaa raifu* (シルバー・ライフ; silver+life, life after retirement) and *shirubaa shiito* (シルバー・シート; silver+seat: priority seats for the elderly on JR trains). Another example is *haroo waaku* (ハローワーク; hello+work) which probably sounds like a less intimidating place for restructured salary men than *shokugyo anteijo* (職業安定所), which is the official Japanese name for an employment center.

A final point on the euphemistic function of loanwords is that they may have a deceptive quality (Ostuka 2001). For example, the phrase *kurinnesu sutaffu* (クリンネススタッフ;

cleanness+staff), which appeared in a classified job advertisement for office cleaners, uses the noun *kurinnesu* to make the job description sound more pleasant. However, the pay and conditions are likely to be the same as any other *soojifu* (掃除夫; a cleaner). Loan companies that avoid the Japanese word *shakkin* (借金; loan) in their advertising provide another example. These companies often advertise their services using less direct names such as *kaado roon* (カードローン; card+loan) or *kyasshingu* (キャッシング; cashing). While the avoidance of the word *shakkin* may make it psychologically easier to take out a loan, these companies are not necessarily any more magnanimous than traditional money lenders should a customer fall into debt.

Conclusion

According to Morrow (1987), the use of English in Japan is “rather circumscribed” compared to countries like India or Singapore where English is more “institutionalized” (59). Rather than providing a language for government or a literature (as is the case in certain periphery-English speaking countries), probably one of the most important functions of English in Japan is as a source of loanwords that form an integral part of the Japanese language itself. The filling of lexical gaps is only one of the functions performed by loanwords in Japanese; indeed, in the field of advertising, and possibly in other discourse areas, special-effect givers play an equally if not more important role.

Ideas for Future Research

Future research could compare the use of loanwords in advertising with other genres (e.g. business Japanese or scientific Japanese), and perhaps develop the work of Shintani (1999), who carried out a comparative study on the frequency and function of loanwords in advertising and hard news articles. Such comparative studies could provide a greater understanding of the way in which copywriters use loanwords, compared to other writers such as journalists.

Comparing the use of loanwords in Japanese adverts with those from other non-Western cultures is another potential research area. For instance, a comparative study of Korean and Japanese advertising could examine whether the absence of a script equivalent to katakana in Korean has led to more English loanwords remaining in Roman script, rather than being transcribed into the native Korean script (*hangul*). In this way, the influence of katakana as a facilitator of loanword adoption could be ascertained.

Aspects of this study may be relevant to the English language classroom. Firstly, loanwords used in advertising provide a large corpus of English-derived words that have the potential to aid communication with English speakers. Fujiwara (1996) found that teaching material based on loanwords collected from the media was “very effective” for vocabulary building in a high school class (151). Further research is needed to determine ways of getting students to utilize their latent vocabulary of borrowed English words in order to improve their English. Secondly, due to the large number of false cognates, loanwords may also prove an obstacle to learning correct English. For example *furonto*, (front) means a hotel reception in Japanese, but does not have this meaning in English. The presentation of examples of such

false friends within the context of a familiar media like advertising could be a valuable exercise in making students aware of the limitations of “*katakana* English”, and may also provide interesting material for classes on cross-cultural issues.

Finally, even Japanese who are quite proficient in English may not realize that the pseudo loanwords they commonly use are not recognized by native English speakers. It may be interesting to select a number of pseudo loanwords from advertisements, or other texts, and examine the extent to which Japanese speakers recognize them as being Japanese creations. This could also be used as an exercise for raising language awareness in the classroom.

Notes

1. This paper draws on the results of the author’s MA dissertation into the function of loanwords in Japanese print advertising. Over 500 loanwords were collected from 50 advertisements belonging to three product fields: cars, high-tech and health and beauty. The loanwords were categorized according to their function (lexical gap filler, special effect substitutes, technical term or euphemism) and the percentage of loanwords from each functional category was compared across product fields.
2. Pseudo loanwords are English loanwords which have been combined to produce unique combinations that are not found in English, and would not usually be understood by native speakers. They are called *wasei eigo* (和製英語; lit. English made in Japan) in Japanese. Examples include: *peepadoraibaa* (ペーパー・ドライバー; paper + driver) which describes a person who has a driver’s license, but doesn’t actually drive and *gooru in* (ゴール・イン; goal + in) a popular term meaning “to get married”.
3. [J]=Japanese word. Signifies the Japanese part of loan blends (a type of borrowing in which one part of the word is borrowed from a second language and the other part usually belongs to the native language).
4. The term *hea nuudo* was coined in 1991 after the government liberated laws to allow pubic hair to be shown in nude photographs. Prior to this time, censors were required to literally scratch out this area from the photograph.

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